

## Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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R 240730Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1430

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:PFOR, ELAB, PINT, TS

SUBJECT: UGTT CELEBRATES 30TH ANNIVERSARY

REF: TUNIS 0178

1. SUMMARY: ON JANUARY 20, THE GENERAL UNION OF TUNISIAN WORKERS (UGTT) CELEBRATED ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY WITH A LARGE MEETING ATTENDED BY NEARLY ALL TOP LEADERS OF DESTROURIAN SOCIALIST PARTY (PSD) AND NUMEROUS FOREIGN GUESTS. THE MEETING WAS A TOUR DE FORCE FOR UGTT LEADER HABIB ACHOUR WHO REVELED IN THE CONTINUOUS CHANTING OF "LONG LIVE ACHOUR" AND RUBBED MOHAMED SAYAH'S NOSE IN THE DIRT BY DEMONSTRATING HIS CONTROL OF TUNISIA'S SOLE TRADE UNION ORGANIZATION. ACHOUR ALSO CONSPICUOUSLY SHOWED OFF HIS FOREIGN CONTACTS, ESPECIALLY THE AFL-CIO'S IRVING BROWN,

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AND CRITICIZED THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION FOR

NOT ACTING MORE REALISTICALLY IN MIDDLE EAST DISPUTE  
BY TALKING WITH ISRAELIS. PRIME MINISTER HEDI NOUIRA  
USED HIS SPEECH TO UGTT MEETING TO REITERATE THE FUNDAMENTALS OF HIS "CONTRACT FOR PROGRESS" ECONOMIC POLICY  
AND THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING NATIONAL UNITY.  
END SUMMARY.

2. ON JANUARY 20, THE UGTT HELD ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY  
CELEBRATION WITH A MEETING OF 1500 TRADE UNIONISTS IN THE  
TUNIS LABOR EXCHANGES. IN ADDITION TO UGTT LEADERSHIP,  
MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY NEARLY ENTIRE TOP LEADERSHIP OF  
PSD PLUS NUMEROUS FOREIGN REPRESENTATIVES. LATTER INCLUDED  
IRVING BROWN OF AFL-CIO, PATRICK O'FARRELL OF ALLC,  
OTTO KERSTEN OF ICFTU, THE EGYPTIAN MINISTER OF LABOR  
AND LEADERS FROM MOROCCAN, ARAB, AFRICAN, AND PALESTINIAN  
LABOR ORGANIZATIONS. IT WAS UNDENIABLY HABIB ACHOUR'S NIGHT,  
WITH CONSTANT CHANTING OF HIS NAME BY THE CROWD. WHILE  
PARTY DIRECTOR MOHAMED SAYAH ALSO ATTENDED, THE ONLY  
NOTORIETY HE RECEIVED ALL EVENING WAS A LONELY SHOUT OF  
"LONG LIVE SAYAH" BY A BODY GUARD. THE "CELEBRATION"  
CONSISTED OF THREE AND ONE-HALF HOURS OF SPEECHES WITH  
HABIB ACHOUR'S SPEECH THE HIGH POINT OF THE EVENING.

3. ACHOUR CONCENTRATED MOST OF HIS SPEECH ON HISTORY  
OF UGTT GOING BACK TO 1926. HE GAVE CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION  
TO THE CLOSE ASSOCIATION OF TUNISIAN AND AMERICAN TRADE  
UNION MOVEMENTS IN THE LATE 40'S AND EARLY 50'S. ACHOUR  
ADDRESSED HIMSELF TO THE RECENT ECONOMIC GAINS OF THE  
UGTT AND HEAPED PRAISE ON THE EFFECTIVE POLICIES OF  
PRIME MINISTER NJIRA. HE CONTRASTED NOUIRA'S RECORD  
WITH THE "DISTRESSING PERIOD OF COLLECTIVIZATION" BEFORE  
1969. ACHOUR ALSO DISCUSSED INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS,  
PARTICULARLY THE MIDDLE EAST QUESTION. HE CRITICIZED  
THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION FOR NOT ACTING MORE REALISTIC-  
ALLY IN THE DISPUTE BY TALKING WITH ISRAELIS.  
ACHOUR CITED UGTT'S MEMBERSHIP IN ICFTU, TO WHICH  
ISRAELI HISTADRUT ALSO BELONGS, AS MODEL FOR CORRECT  
APPROACH TO SOLVING PROBLEMS THAT DIVIDE ARABS AND  
ISRAELIS. PUBLISHED ACCOUNTS OF ACHOUR'S SPEECH OMITTED  
MENTION OF THESE COMMENTS.

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4. FOREIGN PARTICIPATION IN UGTT CELEBRATION APPEARED  
DESIGNED TO SHOW OFF ACHOUR'S INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS,  
PARTICULARLY WITH AFL-CIO AND WITH PALESTINIANS.  
PLO TRADE UNIONIST MOHAMED ABU ELLAIL USED HIS SPEECH  
TO CATALOG ISRAELI "CRIMES" AGAINST PALESTINIANS BUT THE  
ALSO CRITICIZED EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI SECOND INTERIM AGREEMENT.  
EGYPTIAN LABOR MINISTER, WHEN HIS TURN CAME, ANSWERED

THIS CRITICISM AND REPORTEDLY DEFENDED THE AGREEMENT. IRVING BROWN, WHO HAD TO PUT UP WITH HECKLERS DEMANDING THAT HE DISCUSS PALESTINE, SUMMARIZED AFL-CIO OBJECTIVES IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND PRAISED UGTT LEADERS, BOTH PAST AND PRESENT, FOR THEIR DEVOTION TO FREE TRADE UNIONISM.

5. PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA, THE LAST SPEAKER OF THE EVENING, GAVE A TIRED AUDIENCE A REVIEW OF HIS ECONOMIC POLICIES GENERALLY CALLED THE "CONTRACT FOR PROGRESS." HE NOTED VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE POLICY THAT BENEFIT WORKERS, STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY, AND POINTED OUT THAT THE SUCCESS OF THE POLICY DEPENDS ON THE MAINTENANCE OF NATIONAL UNITY.

6. COMMENT: THE UGTT ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION WAS A TOUR DE FORCE FOR HABIB ACHOUR. ON HIS OWN TURF, HE DISPLAYED TO THE PSD'S POLITICAL BUREAU, INCLUDING MOHAMED SAYAH, HIS CONTROL OF TUNISIA'S SOLE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. SHOWING HIS SELF-CONFIDENCE, HE EXPRESSED SOME UNORTHODOX OPINIONS ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE AND WAS NOT AFRAID TO SHOW HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH THE AFL-CIO, ONE OF THE LEADING SUPPORTERS OF ISRAEL. SAYAH COULD NOT HAVE ENJOYED THIS EVENING WHICH UNDERLINED AND PUNCTUATED HIS FAILURE TO UNSEAT ACHOUR AS UGTT LEADER. SEELYE

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